

COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

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Mariano Vallejo and the "General's" Map, Part 1

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The only Casa de Bandini historic map known to date is one drawn from General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo's memory. Born at the Monterey Presidio on July 4th, 1807, Vallejo was the eighth child of Sgt. Ignacio Ferrer Vallejo and Maria Antonia Lugo. Vallejo's father Ignacio had come to San Diego in 1774 with the Moncada-led expedition. Raised also with his nephew Juan Bautista Alvarado (a future governor of California) and boyhood friend Jose Castro (a future commandant general), Vallejo's early memories included surviving the 1818 destruction of the Monterey Presidio by the pirate Hippolyte Bouchard. A favorite of Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola and the Englishman William Hartnell, Vallejo was coached in politics, English, French, Latin and accounting at an early age. At only 15 he was the secretary of California Governor Luis Arguello.

A cadet in the Monterey Company by 1824, he later became a member of the territorial legislature (*diputacion*), and in 1833

military commandant of the San Francisco Presidio. Sent that year to investigate the Russians at Ft. Ross, he was authorized to establish a military presence at Sonoma. Receiving in 1834 a grant to Rancho Petaluma (eventually 66,000 acres), Vallejo began to seriously develop his influence and political control of the area north of San Francisco Bay. Governor Jose Figueroa warned Vallejo, who was known for self-promotion, in the now famous line:

This government trusts...
you will not let escape an
opportunity to deserve the
premium to which all men
aspire—POSTHUMOUS
FAME...

Who was this Spaniard, Mexican, American and Californian, and how did he come to draw this map? Years later, struggling to record his memories of changing times for the historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vallejo would write of his pro-American leanings (born after all on the 4th of July), of his appointment as *comandant general* (hence the title "General Vallejo" although he was only a *colonel* in the Mexican Army), and of his imprisonment at Sutter's Fort during the U.S.-Mexican War in the five volume *Historical and Personal Memoirs Relating to Alta California* and the 36 volume *Documentos para la Historia*



de California (Bancroft Library). During this time, he must have drawn two San Diego maps: the only known sketches of the San Diego Presidio and the Casa de Bandini.

After a long and influential life, including experimentation with wine-growing in Napa and Sonoma, an 1865 visit to Washington, D.C. to see his hero George Washington's belongings, and initial work to save the redwoods, Vallejo spent his last days struggling to make ends meet, selling water and produce from his final home *Lachryma Montis* (Mountain Tear). The realities of American democracy had not matched his dreams. His son-in-law paid for his funeral when he died on January 18, 1890. Part 2 of this series shows his hand-drawn map of the Bandini House, and the challenge translator Cynthia Hernandez had bringing its original meaning to light.

